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baldwinpartners
baldwin county partners in education

guidelines for
school-business partnerships

Baldwin County Partners in Education
Baldwin County Public Schools

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overview

definition

Partners in Education is a nationally validated program connecting students, teachers and administrators with business, government, volunteer and civic leaders. The program is an effective method for engaging citizens in the teaching and learning process, increasing public awareness about education issues and fostering ownership for school and student success.

A partnership is official when both sides make a declaration of their intent to work together for the school year. The key elements to success are effective communication and planning, and a sincere commitment to enhancing student achievement.

objectives

1. To improve and reinforce students' skill development and supplement classroom curriculum with relevant learning experiences in business and community.
2. To provide a realistic view and understanding of the business world in order to prepare students for living and working in the 21st century.
3. To provide a mechanism for businesses to share hands-on experiences.
4. To meet the employment needs of the business community.
5. To create awareness about the needs facing our schools.

benefits

Partnerships require a culture that reinforces community involvement recognizing that it creates a win/win for the student, school, business, and the community.

Community Benefits:

- Improved economic environment and ability to attract new businesses and provide for economic growth
- Lower dropout rate resulting in a lower crime rate, less unemployment and fewer welfare recipients

Business Benefits:

- Enhanced community image
- Better prepared workforce
- Improved employee morale

School Benefits:

- Provides added human and financial resources to the school
- Provides teachers with ideas for innovative approaches to learning
- Reinforces school message that education is important for life

Student Benefits:

- Enhances and supports student achievement
- Demonstrates the relevancy of academics and the work place
- Provides opportunities for greater career awareness
- Provides learning opportunities in non-traditional settings
- A greater understanding and appreciation of the community and business world

process

Initial Interest:

- The **Partners in Education** Program is totally voluntary and usually begins when a business, organization, or individual expresses an interest in volunteering.

Planning Meeting:

- A meeting is held involving the partner, school principal, and school coordinator to discuss school needs and how the partner can help to meet those needs. The partner will also discuss their needs and resources and what they hope to achieve through the partnership. This meeting is the most crucial and creative part of the process.

Partner Agreement:

- Upon identifying a mutually beneficial partnership, the information is identified using a template **Partner Agreement Form** and signed by both parties.

Orientation & Training:

- An orientation is held with the school faculty to share plans and the effective use of services provided by the partner. Training and screening may also be necessary for partner employees and should be provided as necessary.

Partnership activities begin.

Monitor:

- Periodic meetings and visits will be necessary to discuss progress and revise needs and resources as needed.

Recognize:

- Partners and volunteers will be recognized through publicity, certificates, media and other activities. A window decal will also be provided to partners to display in their business location as a Partner-in-Education.

Evaluate:

- Each year an evaluation will be given to each partner and school to complete to assess progress and success of the program.

partner information

keys to success

The following is a list of suggested items to provide some guidelines and assist in the development of the partnership.

- Gain top management support and participation. The CEO or the organizations leader must have a corporate commitment to the program.
- Encourage a corporate culture that reinforces community service.
- Designate a committed and enthusiastic coordinator with approved on-the-job time for the program.
- Have an understanding of the business' overall philosophy and objectives in establishing a partnership. What is the motivation for the partnership? Is it corporate philanthropy, a desire to give back to the community, or a desire to produce a more educated workforce?
- Establish a strong working relationship with the school partner including teachers and administrators.
- Identify and understand the different cultures between business and education.
- Inventory and assess corporate resources - human and financial - that will be available to the school partner.
- Share the overall plan and activities with employees and encourage their participation.
- Maintain a win/win attitude.

partner opportunities

A business or community organization does not need district approval to become a partner. However, there are limitations on the appropriateness of an activity. Partnerships must comply with all School Board policies and with state and federal law. Volunteers are provided training. In general, partnerships operate in any of the following areas. Imagination, the business' needs, and resources may add others.

- **Reading Buddies**
Read to one or more students at the elementary level or have students read to you.
- **Big Brother / Big Sister**
A nationally recognized mentoring program. Commit to one hour per week with the same student. Serve as a positive adult role model providing friendship, encouragement, and motivation.

- **Wouldn't Be Cool**

A one-hour course targeting 4th grade students to create career awareness. Volunteers share information about their career, skills required, and the importance of academics for future success.

- **Choices**

Designed to make students aware that decisions they make today greatly determine their future. Volunteers commit to one-hour and are provided a nine minute DVD, targeting 8th grade students.

- **Staff Development**

Business partners provide support and resources for teacher with training to ensure they have access to the highest level of organizational, leadership, and management strategies.

- **Career Academies**

Align and integrate the business' line of work and occupations with the curriculum to help student explore and establish career goals. Provide resources for: guest speakers, mock interviews, career shadowing, paid and non-paid internships / apprenticeships.

- **Material and Financial Support**

Involving human resources is more important for partnership development and longevity than giving money; however, partners may provide funding for a variety of items: teacher rewards, student rewards, low-income student fee's, scholarships, supplies, equipment, etc.

partner coordinator role & responsibilities

Key to the success of the partnership is to have an enthusiastic coordinator with approved on-the-job time for the program. This person is most successful if he/she has some decision-making authority, is very knowledgeable about the business, and recognizes the value of the program.

Responsibilities include:

- Become familiar with the school and work with the school coordinator.
- Develop the partnership plan along with the school coordinator and administration.
- Keep executive management aware and informed of the process and progress.
- Prepare materials, inform and recruit potential company volunteers.
- Obtain support and authorization from supervisors for release of volunteers.
- Arrange orientation and other training as needed.
- Maintain log of hours and financial resources contributed for year-end report.
- Coordinate the business side of scheduling, placement, time, changes and evaluation.

volunteers role & responsibilities

- Have a clear understanding of the task you are to perform, the days and hours required and to whom you report.
- Sign in at the school's front office when arriving at the school.
- Attend all necessary training.
- Be timely and confirm attendance. Call-in unavoidable absences.
- Record and report all volunteer hours and activities to the **Partner Coordinator**.

partner agreement form

Business/Organization: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Physical Address: _____

City / State / Zip _____

CEO/Manager: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Partner Coordinator: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

School Partner: _____

School Coordinator: _____

Partner Involvement (check all that apply):

Reading Buddies:

of volunteers: _____ Hours / week: _____

Big Brothers / Big Sisters

of volunteers _____ # of classes (commitment is one-hour / 4th grade class): _____

Wouldn't It Be Cool

Number of volunteers: _____ # of classes (commitment is one-hour / 4th grade class): _____

Choices

of volunteers: _____ # of classes (commitment is one-hour / 8th grade class): _____

Staff Development

List resources provided: _____

Career Academies

List resources provided: _____

Material / Financial

List resources provided: _____

partner evaluation form

*The success of the **Partners in Education** Program is dependent upon regular evaluation. We encourage you to share concerns and recommendations for improvement. An evaluation should be completed at the end of a program, the school year, or a partnership.*

Business / Organization: _____

Partner Coordinator: _____

School Partner: _____

School Coordinator: _____

How would you rate the following aspects of the partnership?

Program Outcomes: *Did students achieve desired outcomes?*

Excellent Good Fair Poor

Comments? _____

Program Content: *Did activities meet expressed goals and objectives?*

Excellent Good Fair Poor

Comments? _____

What positive changes occurred as a result of the partnership? _____

What suggestions do you have for strengthening or improving the partnership? _____

What suggestions do you have for improving the Partners in Education Program? _____

Other comments / suggestions: _____

School Information

principals role & responsibilities

A **Principal** who is strongly committed, enthusiastic, and understands the program, is the KEY to success. Leadership from the Principal gives the program increased credibility and impact with the staff, students, parents and the business partner.

Responsibilities Include:

- Designate a competent and interested school coordinator who has the time to devote to the program.
- Encourage a school environment that contributes to the success of the program.
- Consider new ideas, suggestions and possible changes to make the partnership successful.
- Provide adequate staffing and space for planned partnership activities.
- Stay in touch with the process and progress of the program.
- Express approval of programmatic achievement and staff efforts.
- Confirm the school's commitment to the partnership.
- Encourage school and community recognition of the importance in building bridges of understanding between the education and business community.
- Include the business as part of the school community. Invite them to staff meetings, assemblies, social gatherings and parent organization meetings
- Ensure that appropriate recognition for the business partner takes place.

school coordinators role & responsibilities

The **school coordinator** is the gateway between the community and the school. Partners and prospective partners can be directly recruited by the school coordinator or referred by the **Baldwin County Education Coalition** or one of the seven Education Foundations. The school coordinator must possess knowledge of the school staff and be a respected member of the school team. He/she should be committed to the partnership program, have a good mind for detail and follow through, and can be counted on to do what is agreed upon.

Responsibilities include:

- Keep the Principal informed about the program's process and progress.
- Collaborate with the Principal and school staff in maintaining a list of needs for the school.
- Work with the business representative and become knowledgeable about the business with which the school is partnered.
- Develop the partnership plan in collaboration with the business representative.
- Attend training (all PIE materials will be provided) and arrange for staff orientation.
- Promote the program among the school and the school's community.
- Coordinate school side of scheduling, placement, time, changes and evaluation. Keeping track of the program through regular assessment is key to the continuation and success of the program.
- Arrange for follow-up, thank you notes, and distribution of any program information.
- Maintain documentation, photos, & video about the program that can be used to highlight partnership happenings.
- Ensure that appropriate recognition for the business partner takes place.

suggestions for partner recognition

Just as important as developing and maintaining a *"Needs List"* for your school is the development of a way to recognize your partners. Window decals will be provided to each school coordinator and should be given to every partner upon completing a **Partner Agreement Form**. The following additional ideas can be incorporated into your school culture to recognize and thank your partners.

- Recognize partner in school newsletter to parents and students.
- Recognize partner on school marquee.
- Write a letter or press release to the local newspaper.
- Hold a special assembly to recognize partners.
- Plan a special **Partner Day**.

- Put signs in the hallways and on bulletin boards.
- Invite and introduce your partners during a staff meeting.
- Assign a class or group of students to write “thank you” notes.
- Invite partners to your PTA meeting or Open House for introductions.
- Find out the birthday of the volunteer and send them a card or letter created and signed by the students and staff.
- Offer student artwork to the partner for their display.
- Take choral or instrumental music group to partner business or for business function.
- Create an Awards Assembly to honor your partner.
- Invite partner to serve on School Advisory Council.

Other ideas are welcomed and encouraged. *Please share your ideas so that all schools can benefit and do a better job showing their appreciation.*

school evaluation form

The success of the Partners-in-Education Program is dependent upon regular evaluation. We encourage you to share concerns and recommendations for improvement. An evaluation should be completed at the end of a program, the school year, or a partnership.

Business / Organization: _____

Partner Coordinator: _____

School Partner: _____

School Coordinator: _____

How would you rate the following aspects of the partnership?

Program Outcomes: *Did students achieve desired outcomes?*

Excellent Good Fair Poor

Comments? _____

Program Content: *Did activities meet expressed goals and objectives?*

Excellent Good Fair Poor

Participation: *Was the partner committed?*

Excellent Good Fair Poor

Comments? _____

What positive changes occurred as a result of the partnership? _____

What suggestions do you have for strengthening or improving the partnership? _____

What suggestions do you have or improving the Partners in Education Program? _____

Other comments / suggestions: _____

Baldwin Partners is a joint initiative
of the Baldwin County Education Coalition
and the Baldwin County Public Schools.

*The **Baldwin County Education Coalition** is an independent, non-profit,
nonpartisan organization of public school advocates.
We work for systemic improvements through seven local education
foundations in partnership with key business and elected leadership
and the **Baldwin County Board of Education**.*

*Our shared vision for creating world-class schools is inspiring a new
public story of civic innovation in Baldwin County.*



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502 W. Lee Avenue / PO Box 932 / Summerdale, AL 36580 / 251.989.2262 / info@betterbaldwin.com

